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A CIA Bungle?

It would be a mistake for the American public to start regarding the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency as a bungling organization because of last week's fiasco in Cuba, where Fidel Castro's armed forces smashed an invasion attempt.

In the first place it is not publicly known to what extent the CIA was involved in the adventure, although the government has not denied assertions that the agency supported training camps for Cuban refugees preparing an attack.

In the second place, even if the CIA misinterpreted the internal situation in Cuba, its record since its formation more than a dozen years ago contains more to praise than to condemn. Its most generally known previous misadventure involved the U-2 spy plane over the Soviet Union, and it is not altogether clear it was in a blameworthy position in that incident.

Against that, and the Cuban affair, the CIA can mention prediction of the Hungarian revolt against the Communists, prediction of Soviet space satellites a year before the launching of the first sputnik, and foreknowledge of the British, French, and Israeli attack on Egypt and the Suez Canal.

There is no real indication that the Kennedy administration has lost confidence in the CIA or in its director, Allen W. Dulles, brother of the late John Foster Dulles, President Eisenhower's secretary of state. Although its activities are cloaked in utmost secrecy, it is no secret that the agency maintains a formidable organization for obtaining, abstracting, and indexing information on a comprehensive scale.

Despite what has happened in Cuba, it should not be forgotten that the CIA was instrumental in the Guatemalan revolution of 1954 which overthrew international communism's first major attempt to establish a Communist government in the Western Hemisphere, although proving CIA complicity would be—as it ought to be in such undertakings—a difficult matter.

It may be equally difficult to prove the agency's role in the Cuban invasion, and certainly it would be the rankest guesswork to lay upon it the major blame for an expedition that fizzled.